

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----025196 282045Z /73

R 281922Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4027

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 19436

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN SITUATION

REF: STATE 303347

1. IN SHARP DISTINCTION TO THE FRENCH SITUATION, AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND EC MEMBER STATE REPRESENTATIVES HERE ARE RELAXED ABOUT ITALY. THE SUBJECT JUST DOES NOT COME UP IN OUR DISCUSSIONS NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY SIGNIFICANT PRESS COVERAGE INDICATING ENHANCED CONCERN. EVEN OUR OLD FRIEND EMMANUEL GAZZO, WHO IS AS SENSITIVE AS ANYONE IN BRUSSELS TO TRENDS IN ITALY, HAS NEITHER SAID NOR WRITTEN ANYTHING REFLECTING SERIOUS POLITICAL CONCERN IN RECENT MONTHS.

2. THIS SAID, IT IS PREDICTABLE, BASED ON KNOWN REACTIONS AND THINKING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY PRIOR TO THE LAST NATIONAL ITALIAN ELECTIONS, THAT EUROPEANS WOULD BE ALARMED WERE A GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE IN ROME TO GIVE THE PCI A GREATER ROLE.

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3. THOSE I WOULD CALL GOOD EUROPEANS BELIEVE THAT COMMUNISTS IN A MEMBER STATE GOVERNMENT WOULD PRESENT A THREAT TO THE COMMUNITY IN MANY WAYS, NOT LEAST TO THE BASIC DEMOCRATIC AND LIBERAL MARKET PHILOSOPHY UPON WHICH THE COMMUNITY IS BUILT. BUT ALSO BECAUSE SOME OF THE ECONOMIC POLICIES ESPOUSED BY THE PCI (AND MORE

CLEARLY BY THE PCF) WOULD INEVITABLY DISTORT COMMUNITY TRADE AND FINANCIAL RELATIONS, AND BECAUSE EVEN THEIR ADVOCACY CREATES UNCERTAINTY FOR INVESTMENT AND PROMOTES CAPITAL FLIGHT. ALSO IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW THE INCREASINGLY SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL COOPERATION AMONG THE NINE COULD BE MAINTAINED WERE THE PCI OR THE PCF TO BE IN A POSITION DECISIVELY TO INFLUENCE COMMUNITY FOREIGN POLICY. THUS "GOOD EUROPEANS" WOULD BE OPEN TO DISCRETE SUGGESTIONS FOR REMEDIAL ACTION.

4. WHETHER OR NOT THE COMMISSION AND THE COMMUNITY MORE GENERALLY WOULD BE INCLINED TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT AN ENHANCED PCI ROLE WOULD, I THINK, DEPEND PRIMARILY ON A JUDGMENT AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THEY COULD ACT EFFECTIVELY. AS YOU KNOW, THE COMMUNITY DID PROVIDE ITALY SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 1976 BUT THE ECONOMIC MECHANISMS AT THE NORMAL DISPOSAL OF THE COMMISSION ARE OF MOST UNCERTAIN POLITICAL IMPACT. INSTITUTIONALLY IT WOULD BE PREDISPOSED TO ACT IN WHATEVER WAY SEEMED TO BE NECESSARY TO HOLD THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS COULD

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 19436

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MEAN A WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMMODATE THE PCI IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. ONE COMMUNITY ACTION ALREADY EN TRAIN IS NOT WITHOUT RELEVANCE TO THE ITALIAN SITUATION, ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN FORMULATED AS A DESIRABLE STEP TO BE TAKEN IN RELATION TO THE NEW APPLICANTS, GREECE, PORTUGAL, AND SPAIN. I REFER TO WORK UNDER WAY TO ADOPT A DECLARATION AFFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF THE MAINTENANCE OF A PLURALISTIC, DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN MEMBER COUNTRIES. THIS

IS INTENDED, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, TO FILL A PECULIAR GAP
IN THE TREATIES OF ROME WHEREIN IT WAS NOT EXPLICITLY
STATED THAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHOULD BE DEMOCRACIES.
SUCH A DECLARATION, IF ADOPTED, AS SEEMS LIKELY NEXT YEAR
IN CONJUNCTION WITH DECISION ON DATES FOR DIRECT ELECTION
TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, WOULD IN THEORY PROVIDE A
NEW BASE FOR COMMUNITY ACTION WERE THE ENTRY OF COMMUNISTS
OR FASCISTS INTO A MEMBER GOVERNMENT TO BE SEEN TO BE
THREATENING THE MAINTENANCE OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

6. FINALLY, I SHOULD PERHAPS NOTE MY PERSONAL BELIEF THAT
FOR LONGER TERM, THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM IN ITALY IS
THE CHAOTIC SITUATION IN THE UNIVERSITIES. MOREOVER THIS
SITUATION IS NOT UNRELATED TO THE APPARENTLY INCREASING
LEVELS OF VIOLENCE AND TO THE ARGUMENTS BEING ADVANCED BY
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THE PCI AND OTHERS THAT A STRONG "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL
UNITY" IS NEEDED. UNFORTUNATELY, OTHER THAN ENCOURAGING
THE GROWTH OF SERIOUS PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN
ITALY AND STUDY OUTSIDE ITALY, I SEE LITTLE THAT EUROPEANS
OR AMERICANS CAN DO ABOUT PREPARING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF
ITALIANS TO BETTER HANDLE THEIR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
PROBLEMS.

7. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH REPEAT ROME AND OTHER ADDRESSEES
OF REFTEL. HINTON

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